

NO HAND OUT

Address by Admiral Stansfield Turner
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I am indeed pleased to be with this particular association because there is such a close association between you and your industries and us in the intelligence community. The challenges facing you throughout your business life are very similar to those that beset the intelligence community today. I suggest that one of your first challenges is to adapt to the events in the world around us which are changing all the time. A second challenge you always face is to predict what science and technology will bring forth that you can make available to your customers. And a third challenge is to anticipate what those customers needs and demands are going to be in the years ahead. I admire the way in which you meet those three challenges. Let me describe how they are similar to our challenges in the intelligence business of our country.

First, we must adapt to a different perception that the United States has of its role in the world. Second, we must adapt to the greater sophistication in the techniques of collecting intelligence which you and others in related industries are making available to us. Third, we must adapt to a much different attitude of the public of this country that wants to know more about intelligence activities than ever before. I would like very quickly to discuss with you how we are trying to respond to these challenges.

First, let me look at the changing perception the United States has of its role in the world. We are, I believe, in a state of transition in public attitudes towards foreign affairs. We are moving away from an activist interventionist outlook to one which recognizes more clearly the limits on our ability to influence events in foreign countries. We are not becoming isolationists. Quite the contrary. We are gradually emerging from our post-Vietnam aversion to intervening on the international scene and entering into a national view of the world which is much more reasoned and balanced. Clearly, the United States must continue to play a major role on the world scene. What is different perhaps is that in today's circumstances we must gauge more carefully what that role can and should be.

For instance, look at the difficulty today in simply deciding whom we are for and whom we are against in any international issue. Traditionally, we always were in favor of the fellow the Soviets were against. Today, things are not quite that simple. In the last year and a half there have been at least two international conflicts in which two communist nations were pitted against each other with the Soviets supporting one but not the other in each case. Neither was a likely candidate for our support.

Beyond that, today, it is not nearly so clear that the United States should take sides in every international issue even if the Soviets are pressing for an advantage. The consequences of any nations succumbing to communist influence is not as irreversible as perhaps we once thought. Look back on Indonesia, Egypt, the Sudan, Somalia. All came under substantial communist influence and all have returned to independence. Now what this adds up to is not that we are impotent on the international scene, but that the leverage of our influence, while still considerable, must be exercised more subtly. We must be more concerned with long term influences rather than just putting a finger in the dike. And if we want to be able to anticipate rather than simply react to events, the intelligence community must be able to recognize and interpret the underlying themes and forces which we can expect to influence events over time. This means a vastly expanded scope of intelligence work.

Thirty years ago the primary focus in intelligence was on Soviet military activities. Today the threat to our national well-being comes not only from the Soviets and from the military. We must be equally concerned with politics, economics, food resources, population growth, narcotics, international terrorism and technology transfer to name just a few. These new areas of concern represent the expanding intercourse among nations in an increasingly interdependent world. Many of you may be involved in the questions of technology transfer. While I have listed it here as a new concern, the first recorded instance of technology transfer problems for our country was in 1622. Just south of here, near Jamestown, a new colony of 200 settlers was almost wiped out by an Indian tribe. The home company in England immediately dispatched a ship with new military equipment so the settlers could defend themselves against these Indians. They got body armor from the Tower of London, and some of the most sophisticated crossbows of that day. When they arrived near Jamestown they handed out the body armor although it was not much use against Indians. But when they looked at the crossbows they realized that to transfer to this continent the technology of a sophisticated crossbow was more than they could possibly risk. They took them all back to England. That is a true story. So technology transfer problems are nothing new today, though I would suggest today that poor handling of technology transfer can have a much greater impact on our country than in the days of crossbows.

There is not an academic discipline, not a geographical area of the world in which we in the intelligence community can afford not to be well-informed if we are going to serve policy makers well. Thus, this is a more demanding time perhaps than ever before for intelligence and it is a time of vast expansion of the subject matter with which we must be intimately concerned.

The second trend bringing change is the technological revolution in the way that we collect information. It is a revolution that I hardly need detail to this audience. Thanks to you, our national capabilities in the technical area--in overhead photography, in signals intercept--are unequalled in the world. Interestingly, however, rather than denigrating

the role of the human intelligence agent or the spy, these burgeoning capabilities in photography and signals intercept in fact heighten the importance of the human intelligence element. The more information that our technical systems provide to us the more questions are raised. Generally, a photograph or a signals intercept tells us something that happened in the past. The policy maker then asks why it happened and what may happen next. Discerning intentions, plans, incentives of foreign individuals or nations is the forte of the human intelligence agent.

Thus, today our challenge is not only to be able to absorb and utilize the vast quantities of technically collected information but also to be able to pull that effort together in an orchestrated, complementary manner so that we can acquire the information this country needs with minimum risk and cost.

Now I am sure this sounds logical and simple, but as you all well know, intelligence in our country is spread over a vast bureaucracy. It is lodged in many departments and agencies, each with its own priorities. We can no longer absorb and process this flow of intelligence efficiently if we adhere to traditional, compartmented, parochial ways of doing business. So, there has been some fundamental restructuring to accommodate these changes. A year and a quarter ago President Carter signed a new Executive Order which gave to the Director of Central Intelligence new authority over the budgets of all national intelligence organizations and authority to direct the way in which they collect intelligence. The task of developing a true sense of teamwork among a myriad of agencies, bureaus, and organizations is still in the process of evolving. But, it is having a very substantial effect on the whole intelligence apparatus.

The third element driving change today is the increased public attention to intelligence activities ever since the investigations from 1974 to 1976. Those investigations brought to American intelligence more public attention than has ever before been brought to bear on a major intelligence organization. The impact could not help but be substantial and frankly, within the intelligence community, it has been traumatic. The right kind of attention can be beneficial both to us and to the American public. By the right kind I mean visibility which gives the public access to information about the general way we go about our business and why we are doing what we are doing, and which also confirms that the controls which have been established over the intelligence community are being exercised as was intended.

To achieve this right kind of visibility, the intelligence community is more open. We pass more of the information which we gain and produce to you, the American public, through unclassified publication of our studies than ever before. We look at every analysis or an estimate that we do and ask ourselves, if we take out that information which would reveal our sources and that information which gives our policy makers a special advantage in foreign policy, will the remaining substance support the conclusions we have come to and is the topic adequately

important to the public that we should publish it. If the answer is yes, we do. In addition, we answer questions from the press more; we speak in public more, as I am privileged to tonight, we participate more in academic conferences and symposia. I know that the intelligence community is doing an honorable and a vital job for our country and it is doing it well. I personally want you to know as much about it as is compatible with our being able to continue to do that job well.

Still, some of the visibility that we have received in recent years is definitely unwanted. Unwanted because it benefits neither Americans nor our friends and allies. Here I am talking primarily about the unauthorized disclosure of information that has been properly classified. At the least, these disclosures have demoralized an intelligence service that has traditionally and of necessity operated largely in secrecy. Far more important is the destructive effect that such disclosures can and do have on our ability to do the job we are mandated to do by the President and the Congress. No foreign country or individual will entrust lives or sensitive information to us if they do not believe we can keep secrets. It is impossible to carry out the quest for information in a closed society like the Soviet Union, if what we do and how we do it ultimately becomes public knowledge. Improper revelations damage our country's long term ability to know what is going on in the many closed societies around the world.

Yet, let me hasten to add that in my view increased visibility is a net plus. We do need the American public's understanding and support. We must avoid possible abuses. Yet, at the same time we must recognize that with visibility there are also minuses. There are inhibitions on the actions we will take, on the risks that we can take. The issue before our country today is how do we balance our desire for privacy and propriety with the resulting reduction in intelligence capability and covert action potential.

Congress is expected to give expression to this issue of balance shortly. It will do so through the enactment of charters. Charters which set forth what we are authorized to undertake, establish the boundaries within which we must act, and create the oversight mechanism to check on our activities. It is my sincere hope that Congress will pass these charters during this present session. Written with care and sensitivity to the kinds of problems I have been discussing with you, charters could help to resolve some of these fundamental difficulties. Overreaction either by tying the intelligence community's hands or by creating no controls whatsoever would be a mistake. On the one hand, emasculating necessary intelligence capabilities, on the other, inviting abuse.

Let me assure you that in my view our nation's intelligence capabilities are strong and sound. The intelligence community is undergoing substantial change and that is never an easy or a placid process in a large bureaucracy. Out of this present metamorphosis is emerging a new intelligence community. One in which the legal rights of our citizens and the controls and restrictions on intelligence activities

will be balanced with the necessity of gaining information essential to foreign policy. This is not an easy transition. We are not there yet. But, we are moving surely in the right direction. When we reach our goal, we will have constructed a new model of intelligence, a uniquely American model. One tailored to the laws and standards of our society. As we proceed toward this goal we need your understanding and support. For that reason I am grateful to have had this opportunity to be with you tonight. Thank you again for letting me be here and for all you do for us. God bless you.